Failure of PDS

818. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the PDS has failed in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons for such failure and the steps taken or proposed to take to improve PDS in the country;

(c) whether Government are thinking of alternative income generating schemes for the poor in place of PDS; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) (a) and (b) No, Sir, The Public Distribution system (PDS) is one of the important elements of the Government's food security system in the country.

The PDS is the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Govemments/UT Administrations. The Central Government is responsible for procuring, storing and transporting PDS commodities upto the Central godowns and making them available to the States/UTs actual distribution of PDS commodities through Fair Price Shops is the responsibility of the State Governments /UTs Administrations.

Some shortcomings in a vast system of public distribution of subsidized commodities cannot be ruled out altogether. In order to make the PDS more effective, efficient and accountable, the Government has issued the Public Distribution system (Control) Order, 2001 under section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The salient features of the Order relate to proper identification of eligible families, issue of ration cards, licensing of fair shops, scale of issue and issue prices, distribution of essential commodities and monitoring. Any contravention of the provisions of clauses 3,4,6 and 7 of the Order is liable for criminal punishment under section 7 of the Essential Commoditis Act, 1955.

The Government has advised the State Govemments/UT Administrations to involve the Gram Panchayats more substantially in the supervision and monitoring of the PDS, especially at the FPS levele, as a measure of social audit. A Model Citizens' Charter has also been drawn and circulated to States/UTs for adoption.

(c) and (d) No such proposal to replace the PDS is under consideration at present. However, the Government has launched many schemes, including employment generating schemes, for the welfare of the poor.

List of criminals furnished by Pakistan

819. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan has provided any list of alleged Pakistani criminals who were illegally staying in India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and action Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) (a) No, Sir.

In public Pakistani leaders have been making statements to the effect that Pakistan plans to handover its own list of wanted Pakistani criminals allegedly residing in India. These are clearly propagandist ploys by Pakistan to divert attention from the fact that it has not taken any action on the list of 20 fugitives from law handed over to them by India on 31 st December 2001.

(b) does not arise.

Agenda of PoK in Indo-Pak talk

820. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported statement appearing in the Telegraph on 4th February, 2002 that when the talks begin with Pakistan on Kashmir, the issue of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir would top the agenda;

(b) if so, whether the Prime Minister's reported statement signals a new emphasis in the strategy;

(c) whether this aspect of Kashmir dispute has been formally communicated to the authorities in Pakistan; and

(d) if so, their reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH) (a) Yes, Sir. Government have seen the report appearing in the Telegraph on 4th February 2002.